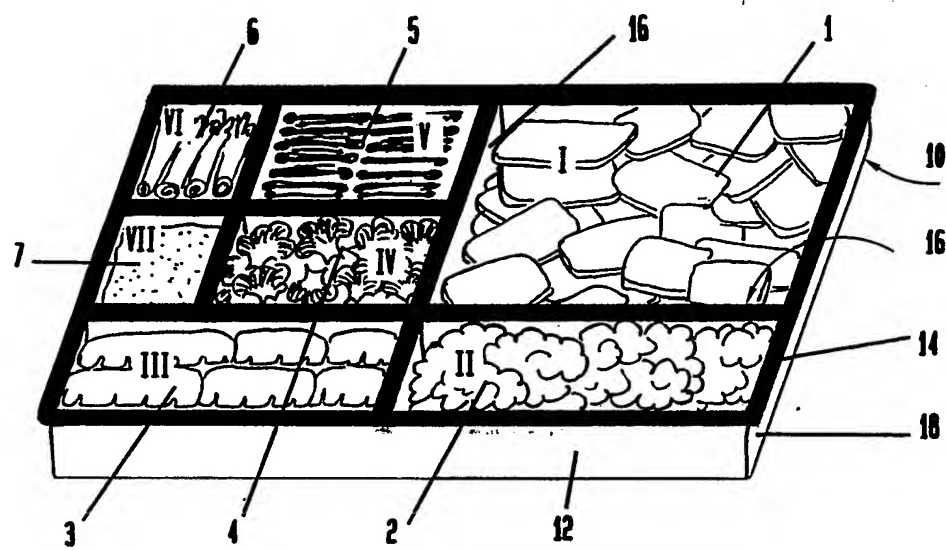


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<b>(54) Title:</b> PACKAGED CHINESE FOOD AND METHOD OF PREPARING SAME  <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>		
<b>(57) Abstract</b>  <p>Provided is a novel method of providing Chinese food dishes adapted for home cooking. The method provides a large savings in time and cost and additionally provides fresh ingredients for making Chinese food dishes at comparatively low cost. The method provides that the fresh ingredients for making a Chinese food dish in accordance with a preselected recipe be collected at a location of a distribution system for said Chinese food dishes along with appropriate containers for packaging the ingredients. The fresh ingredients (I-VII) are cleaned, trimmed and are properly shaped and appropriately packaged, suitably individual compartments of a multicompartment (1-7) container (10) in amounts in conformance to a preselected recipe, which container can be covered and sealed. The provided packages (10) can be transferred to a home for cooking in accordance with the preselected recipe and instructions of which the home kitchen is informed.</p>		

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Packaged Chinese Food and method of preparing same

TECHNICAL FIELD

This invention relates to a novel method of providing Chinese food dishes for home cooking. The method provides a large savings in time and cost and additionally provides fresh ingredients for making Chinese food dishes at comparatively low cost. The method provides that the fresh ingredients for making a Chinese food dish in accordance with a preselected recipe be collected at a location of a distribution system for said Chinese food dishes along with appropriate containers for packaging the ingredients. The fresh ingredients are cleaned, trimmed and are properly shaped and appropriately packaged, suitably individual compartments of a multicompartment container in amounts in conformance to a preselected recipe, which container can be covered and sealed. The package can be transferred to a home for cooking in accordance with the preselected recipe and instructions of which the home kitchen is informed.

BACKGROUND ART

Chinese food has a long history, as long as the Chinese culture. Chinese food and Chinese cooking techniques are one of the most important parts of the Chinese culture. Chinese food has become one of the most popular foods in the United States of America and other countries of the world. In the

United States, it is popular to eat Chinese food for lunch and dinner, based on its good taste, relatively low cost, and the large number of varieties available.

In the recent popularity of Chinese food, there has been an interesting development. Many people are not satisfied with just eating in or taking out from Chinese restaurants. They want to cook Chinese food at their homes for a family dinner or for guests. They want to enjoy fresh Chinese food in the home environment, which cannot be delivered by or from a restaurant. They want not only to enjoy the Chinese food but also to enjoy the success of making high quality Chinese food by themselves at home. To their guests, it is very special that such high quality, fresh Chinese food is made in the homes of their hosts.

It recently became very popular to buy Chinese cookbooks, Chinese cookware sets, and to take video courses or classroom courses on Chinese cooking. But people realized soon that it is comparatively easy to cook Chinese food but it is not easy to make fresh and high quality, authentic Chinese food, since the process of making Chinese food dishes is very complex and time consuming.

In cooking a Chinese dish, there are three steps. The first is to collect all of the ingredients needed after locating a source for each. The second is to prepare the ingredients for cooking - cleaning, trimming and properly shaping them. The last step is to follow proper procedures to

cook the dish. In the majority of situations, the first two steps take a predominant portion of the total time, up to 90% of the total time, for preparing the Chinese food dish.

Most Chinese dishes are made of multiple ingredients. People other than Chinese are usually not familiar with many of them. Many are not sold in regular markets in most countries. One can get them only from special sources such as Chinese food stores, which are few in number in most countries. Since so many ingredients are needed, it is very easy to overlook collecting some of them, or simply not all are available when needed or if available are not fresh when needed. And more important, most Chinese meat dishes differentiate meats of different animals and also require different parts of an animal, such as the shoulder or back meat of pork or beef. With a wrong selection, one cannot properly make a good authentic Chinese dish.

After an individual finally collects all of the ingredients needed, one starts preparing them. They have to be cleaned and cut. Cutting the ingredients into the right shapes and right sizes is the second key to a successfully cooked Chinese food dish. This may be the most difficult part of the whole preparation, many times much more difficult than the final cooking of the dish. In cooking schools in China for Chinese cooking, there is normally a major course in preparation of ingredients. Without special training on how to cut ingredients for a Chinese food dish, it is very difficult to do it properly with-

out spending a lot of time. Although one can follow a cook-book, one cannot gain the needed skill except by being informed as to the proper shapes and sizes of a specific ingredient needed. People cooking a Chinese dish spend much time in this step without any assurance that they will do it correctly.

The last step is the actual cooking, which for most Chinese food dishes takes a minor amount of time, as compared to the total time demanded by the other steps.

It is desired to design and to provide a novel method for providing Chinese food dishes adapted for carrying out in home kitchens. A further objective of this invention is to develop and provide a new product, which is ready-to-cook Chinese food dish package. The new method will save a great deal of time and effort in providing Chinese food dishes in the home which are cooked in the home kitchen, the Chinese dishes being of high quality. The invention allows either skilled or non-skilled cooks in the art of preparing Chinese food dishes to provide top-quality Chinese dishes at home in an easy, time-effective and cost-effective way.

#### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

Provided by this invention is a novel method for providing Chinese food dishes adapted for use in cooking in the home kitchen and a new product which is a ready-to-cook Chinese food dish package. The ingredients for the Chinese dish will be collected at a location of a distribution system for said

Chinese food dishes, will be cleaned, trimmed, cut in a Chinese food acceptable shape and size for preparing the Chinese food dish, and packed into a package adapted for containing separately the ingredients. The package can have multiple compartments to contain separately the ingredients for preparing the Chinese dish. The size of a compartment can be designed or adapted as required to contain the specific ingredient. All ingredients and the container can be suitably sterilized before the ingredients are packed into the container. By means of this process, the packed ingredients will be kept fresh until the package is opened and the ingredients are used in the home kitchen.

The package with the fresh ingredients can be stored in a refrigerator for several days if the aseptic packaging methods or sterilization methods or both are used and the ingredients will remain in good condition during that period of time. The package is made of government approved food packing materials and the packing procedure is acceptable under governmental regulations. The package is preferably transparent, to permit one to see the enclosed ingredients. Each compartment desirably has a specific designation which is also the designation of the specific ingredient contained in that compartment. On the cover of the container, information about the contained ingredients, including their names, identification number and weights or quantities can be shown. Step-by-step cooking instructions can also be printed on the cover of the container,

which can define cooking temperature, cooking time, cooking oil, and other factors to be followed. This package can be adapted to contain sufficient amounts of the ingredients to provide a Chinese food dish which is sufficient to serve only one person or two or more persons. If desired, one or more of the ingredients can be partially cooked. The package also gives one the freedom in cooking to eliminate one or more contained ingredients particular cooks do not wish to include in the final dish or to change the ratio of different ingredients used, thus modifying the dish according to their specific tastes.

At any desired time one wants to cook the Chinese food dish, one can open the package and cook the Chinese food dish according to the provided information regarding the preselected recipe.

The obvious advantages of this novel Chinese food cooking method and the new ready-to-cook Chinese food dish product include:

- 1) time and cost effectiveness;
- 2) assurance of correct and fresh ingredients which are correctly prepared for use in the private kitchen fresh and top-quality cooked Chinese food dishes;
- 3) convenience and ease of preparation; and
- 4) provision of preselected recipe with cooking instructions.



Generally speaking, by the method of this invention is provided Chinese food dishes by use of the following steps:

- 1) at a location of a distribution system for said Chinese food dishes, individually collecting fresh high quality ingredients of preselected Chinese dishes;
- 2) cleaning and trimming said ingredients for preparation of said Chinese food dish;
- 3) preparing said ingredients in preselected Chinese food acceptable dimensions and shapes;
- 4) determining the weight/quantity ratio of ingredients of a preselected Chinese food dish;
- 5) optionally aseptically packaging required amounts of said sized and shaped ingredients in accordance with Step 4 hereof;
- 6) optionally affixing to said container a cover in sealed relationship;
- 7) optionally sterilizing said packaged ingredients and container;
- 8) providing appropriate information to persons acquiring said packages having said ingredients for the Chinese food dishes, to instruct use of said prepared ingredients to cook the desired Chinese food dishes; and
- 9) conveying possession of said packages having said ingredients adapted for home cooking and said information to persons for cooking said Chinese food dishes.

The person receiving said package uses the ingredients of said package and information at a selected time to prepare the Chinese food dish.

Provided also by this invention are the novel packages of the necessary ingredients for carrying out the methods of this invention, suitably having at least three ingredients. Appropriate sauces can desirably be provided by the methods and packages of this invention, especially the special sauces appropriate for the selected Chinese food dish.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The invention will be better understood in the light of the following description of several specific embodiments thereof. The description is made with reference to the accompanying drawings wherein:

FIG. 1 is a top view of a package of this invention showing a container having multiple compartments 1-7 which contain respectively ingredients I-VII for use in cooking a Chinese food dish. An appropriate cover is applied to said container after packing in sealed relationship with said container. FIG. 1 contains the ingredients for cooking the Chinese food "Mo Shu Pork."

FIG. 2 is a top plan view showing the container of FIG. 1 with a cover therefore in place and showing the Chinese food dish name, cooking instructions and other information in diagram form.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION AND PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

FIG. 1 shows a container 10 with multiple compartments 1-7. The container 10 has a sidewall 12 which terminates at the top thereof with a lip 14, which is adapted to receive in a sealable relationship a cover for said container. The compartments are divided one from the other by sidewalls 16. The container has a bottom 18 which constitutes the bottom of each compartment. The sidewalls 16 of the compartments desirably are of the same height as the sidewall 12 of the container.

The container can be made of a government approved (such as the approved Food and Drug Administration - F.D.A. in the United States) polymeric material following conventional fabricating procedures such as thermoforming, injection molding or the like.

The number of compartments and the dimensions and number thereof can be varied widely to accommodate the ingredients of different Chinese food dishes which are contained and conveyed to the home or other kitchen for cooking and to adapt to the number of persons to be served by the cooked Chinese food dish.

The polymeric materials used in fabrication of the container can vary widely so long as it provides a container of the required properties including government approval, dimensional stability, moisture, permeability, stability and other properties known to those skilled in the art.

The polymeric material used can be selected in the fabrication from polyvinylchloride (PVC), biaxially oriented polystyrene, polyester, polypropylene including foamed polypropylene, high density and linear low density polyethylene, laminates of such polymers and copolymers, and other suitable materials. Preferably, the polymeric material will be selected that will maintain the contained ingredients free from outside contamination by unwanted organisms.

The ingredients are desirably packed in an aseptic manner with the ingredients and the container and its affixed cover being in a sterilized condition. The sterilization can be accomplished by known methods such as irradiation, heat, and other known methods.

One or more of the ingredients can be heated or "partially cooked" if desired, such as by blanching or heating in a brief and controlled manner such as generally illustrated in U.S. Patent No. 4,919,948.

The cover for the container such as illustrated in FIG. 2 as cover 20 is attached to the container, preferably in a sealable manner to prevent free passage of environmental air into the container. Desirably the seal between the cover and the container can be accomplished by heat sealing the cover to the container using known sealing methods. Optionally the container surface or the cover surface making the seal there between can have a strip of adhesive which can be covered prior to use by a peelable strip.

The cover for the container can be made a part of the container by, illustratively speaking, a thermoforming procedure, wherein the cover is hingedly attached to one upper surface edge of the container. After the ingredients are packed into the container, the container and the cover can be brought into sealed relationship. Alternatively, the seal can be made by use of mechanical means, such as the upper container surface and the mating cover surface having respective bead and groove which can be snapped together to form a seal, such as a releasable seal which can be disengaged at the time of cooking in the home kitchen.

The compartments of the container desirably each bear a designation, such as sequential number or letter designation. The designations should be readily visible to the person cooking the Chinese food dish. The designation can be formed into the container during the forming process, for example, on the upper lip or rim of the respective compartments.

Information is also provided to the person cooking the ingredients to form the subject Chinese food dish. The information suitably is printed on the cover of the package wherein a list of the ingredient designations with the cooking instructions are provided. The instructions can be printed if desired on the cover so the person cooking the packaged ingredients can remove the cover and follow the instructions for a particular identified ingredient. If desired, the instructions can be reverse printed on the upper surface of the cover if the cover

is hingedly attached to the container. The person cooking then can read the instructions through the transparent cover. Alternatively the cover can be formed with a pocket by attaching to the outside of the cover a separate pocket by affixing as by sealing a pocket closed desirably on three sides with the fourth side remaining open. An instruction card or sheet can be placed into the pocket at the packing location and removed by the person cooking at the home or other kitchen and used for cooking the ingredients.

FIG. 1 shows use of the Chinese dish "Mo Shu Pork" as a specific example to display and contain the ingredients of this dish. The container has seven independent compartments to contain seven ingredients of the dish. The container is preferably transparent so that the enclosed ingredients can be seen without opening the package. The compartments are marked with numbers (1 through 7) in order for consumers to identify more readily the ingredients. Corresponding numbers I-VII are the identification numbers for the respective ingredients.

In FIG. 1, the ingredients are designated I-VII as follows:

<u>Identification No.</u>	<u>Ingredient</u>
I	Sliced pork
II	Stirred fried egg
III	Sliced bamboo root
IV	Founger (fungi)
V	Huang hua

VI Spring onion

VII Sauce

The preferable shapes and dimensions of the above ingredients are as follows:

<u>Ingredient</u>	<u>Shape</u>	<u>Dimensions</u>
pork	irregular rectangular	5 mm thickness 6-7 cm <sup>2</sup> area
egg	irregular	2 cm <sup>3</sup>
bamboo root	rectangular	5 mm thickness 6 cm <sup>2</sup> area
founger	irregular	natural size
huang hua	natural	natural size
spring onion	sliver	4 cm length

In FIG. 2, the Chinese dish "Mo Shu Pork" is used as a specific example. The sealed package is shown with the Chinese food dish product sealed in with cover 20. On the top of cover 20 is printed information 22 including the name of the dish "Mo Shu Pork," the step-by-step cooking instructions, ingredients with identification numbers I-VII, storage suggestions and other information.

At the packing location, all ingredients of the Mo Shu Pork Chinese dish are prepared according to the menu. This includes cleaning, cutting, weighing, etc. Before the packing, the ingredients and the container and the lid are desirably sterilized. The ingredients are then packed into the correct com-

partments. After the container 10 and the cover 20 are joined in sealed relationship, the air inside the case is drawn out through a hole in the container, making the inside of the case a vacuum environment. The air drawing hole will then be closed as by sealing. By means of this vacuum packing method, the ingredients of the case can be stored at room temperature or in a refrigerator for a several-day period of time. During that period, the ingredients keep their freshness.

There are other packing methods available to increase the shelf life of the ingredients of the package. The packing can be done by shrink packaging or can employ a controlled environment in which an inert gas is utilized such as nitrogen or an atmosphere having another inert gas present in an acceptable and effective percentage, such a gas being argon or the like. Reference in regard to packing methods is made to Wiley's Encyclopedia of Packaging Technology, 1982 Ed.



The following examples are illustrative of the invention and are not meant to be limiting.

Example 1

A person buys three packages of the Chinese food dish product of this invention at a distribution location. For example, two packages contain a Chinese food dish and one contains a soup. Each dish and soup are designed to serve two persons. The soup is "Won Ton Soup." The two dishes are "Mo Shu Pork" and "Green Bean Lover." The packages are stored overnight in a refrigerator. The next day, 20 minutes before the planned time for dinner, the home cook removes the packages from the refrigerator and opens them. The respective covers of the packages are retained and the step-by-step instructions printed on the respective covers are followed.

The ingredients (designations shown within parentheses) contained in the respective packages are according to the following menus:

Won Ton Soup:

Won-ton (I)	8 pieces
Soup sauce (II)	0.5 ounce

Mo Shu Pork:

Sliced pork (I)	8.0 ounces
Stirred fried egg (II)	6.0 ounces
Sliced bamboo root (III)	4.0 ounces
Founger (IV)	4.0 ounces

Huang hua (V)	2.0 ounces
Spring onion (VI)	2.0 ounces
Sauce (VII)	2.0 ounces

Green Bean Lover:

Cleaned and trimmed

green beans (I)	16.0 ounces
Spring onions (II)	0.5 ounce
Sliced garlic (III)	0.5 ounce
Sauce (IV)	1.0 ounce

Following the cooking instructions printed on the covers of the dish packages, the home cook begins cooking the dishes, starting with the soup. The cook places a 6 inch soup pot on one of the burners of the stove at a high temperature. The soup pot contains 12 ounces of cold water. The water is heated to boiling in about 10 minutes. While waiting for the pot of water to boil, a 12 inch wok or frying pan is placed on another burner to cook "Green Bean Lover." The stove is set at the hottest temperature and two spoons ("spoon" means herein "tablespoon" unless otherwise indicated) of corn oil are placed into the wok. When the oil begins to smoke slightly, the green beans (I) are put into the wok. The spring onions (II) and the green beans are stirred for two minutes (or until the green beans turn brightly green) and then the garlic (III) and the 1.0 ounce of sauce (IV) are added. The ingredients are stirred for another 30 seconds to complete the cooking. The cooked

dish is placed into a long dish. Optionally, some pepper powder as desired is added. The wok is cleaned for use in cooking the second dish.

After the first dish is cooked, the water in the pot is boiling. Eight Won Tons are placed into the boiling water and are boiled for 1 minute and then the 1.0 ounce soup sauce is placed into the soup. This completes the preparation of the soup.

The highest temperature is also used for cooking the second dish. Four spoons of corn oil are put into the wok. After the oil begins to smoke, the 8 ounces of sliced pork (I) is placed into the wok and is stirred for about one minute (or until the meat turns to a white brownish color). The cooked meat is removed from the wok and placed into a container. Two spoons of corn oil are placed into the wok. After the oil begins to smoke, 2 ounces of spring onions (VI) are placed in the wok and are stirred for 15 seconds, then 4.0 ounces of sliced bamboo root (III), 4.0 ounces founger (IV), and 2.0 ounces huang hua (V) are cooked with stirring for 15 seconds, and then the previously half cooked pork is added and cooked with stirring for 15 seconds. Finally, 2.0 ounces sauce (VII) is placed into the wok and stirred with the ingredients for another 15 seconds. This completes the cooking of the dish and the cooked dish is placed into a round dish.

In less than 20 minutes, one can thereby prepare one soup and two dishes for a two-person Chinese dinner by following this system. The system is broadly applicable to other meals having multiple Chinese food dishes with or without a soup.

The step-by-step cooking instructions printed on the covers of the package are as follows:

Won Ton Soup:

1. Set the stove burner at high temperature.
2. Place a 6-inch soup pan containing 12 ounces of cold water on the burner.
3. Put 8 Won Tons (I) into the water after it boils.
4. Boil Won Tons for 1 minute and then put them in the soup sauce (II).
5. Put the soup into a soup container and serve it hot.

Green Bean Lover:

1. Set the burner of the stove at the highest temperature.
2. Place a 12-inch wok or frying pan on the burner.
3. Put two spoons of corn oil into the wok.
4. Put 0.5 ounce spring onions (II) and 16 ounces of green beans (I) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly.
5. Stir for about two minutes or until the green beans turn completely bright green.
6. Put the garlic (III) and the sauce (IV) into the wok and stir for another 15 seconds.
7. Put the dish into a container and serve it hot.

Mo Shu Pork:

1. Set a stove burner at the highest temperature.
2. Place a 12-inch wok or a frying pan on the stove.
3. Put four spoons of corn oil into the wok.
4. Put 8 ounces of pork (I) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly.
5. Stir the meat for about one minute or until the meat turns completely white brown.
6. Put the meat into a container.
7. Put two spoons of corn oil into the wok.
8. Put 2.0 ounces of spring onions (VI) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly and stir them for 15 seconds.
9. Put 4.0 ounces of bamboo root (III), 4.0 ounces founnger (IV), and 2.0 ounces of huang hua (V) into the wok and stir them for 15 seconds.
10. Put 6.0 ounces stirred fried egg (II) into the wok and stir all ingredients for 15 seconds.
11. Put the previously half cooked pork into the wok and stir all ingredients for 15 seconds or until the pork is cooked through.
12. Put 2 ounces of sauce (VII) into the wok and stir all ingredients for 15 seconds.
13. Put the cooked dish into a container and serve hot.

Example 2

Five Chinese food packages of this invention are purchased, four dishes and one soup. The soup and dishes are designed to serve eight persons. The soup is "Hot and Sour Soup." The four dishes are "Mo Shu Pork," "Honey Roasted Shrimp," "Fried Mushroom," and "Green Bean Lover." The packages are stored in a refrigerated overnight. The next day, 40 minutes before the time set to serve dinner, the packages are removed from the refrigerator and opened. The covers of the dish packages have step-by-step instructions printed on them for cooking the dishes and the soup.

The ingredients contained in the packages are according to the following menus:

Hot and Sour Soup:

Sliced pork (I)	4.0 ounces
Founger (II)	4.0 ounces
Sliced bean curd (III)	8.0 ounces
Sliced bamboo root (IV)	4.0 ounces
Huang hua (V)	2.0 ounces
Sliced ginger (VI)	0.5 ounces
Sliced spring onion (VII)	2.0 ounces
Hot and sour sauce (VIII)	4.0 ounces
Green bean starch (IX)	1.0 ounce

Honey Roasted Shrimp:

Shrimp (extra large) (I)	16 pieces
Sliced spring onion (II)	2.0 ounces
Sliced ginger (III)	1.0 ounce
Sliced garlic (IV)	1.0 ounce
Sauce (V)	4.0 ounces

Fried Mushroom:

Mushroom string (I)	16 pieces
Sauce (II)	8.0 ounces

Mo Shu Pork:

Sliced pork (I)	24.0 ounces
Stirred fried egg (II)	18.0 ounces
Sliced bamboo root (III)	12.0 ounces
Founger (IV)	12.0 ounces
Huang hua (V)	6.0 ounces
Spring onions (VI)	6.0 ounces
Sauce (VII)	6.0 ounces

Green Bean Lover:

Cleaned green beans (I)	32.0 ounces
Spring onions (II)	1.0 ounce
Sliced garlic (III)	1.0 ounce
Sauce (IV)	2.0 ounce

Following the cooking instructions printed on the covers of the dish packages, one cooks the dishes, starting with the soup. A 10 inch soup pot is placed on a stove burner set at high temperature. Into the soup pot is added 48 ounces of cold water. The water is heated to boiling in about 15 minutes. In the meantime, a 12 inch wok or frying pan is placed on another stove burner to cook "Green Bean Lover" and "Honey Roasted Shrimp." The burner is set at the highest temperature. Three spoons of corn oil is added to the wok. When the oil begins to smoke slightly, the spring onions (II) and the green beans (I) are put into the wok. They are cooked for 3 minutes (or until the green beans turn a bright green color). Then the garlic (III) and the sauce (II) are added and the ingredients are stirred for another 30 seconds. The dish is now cooked and is placed into a long dish. Optionally the dish can be seasoned with pepper powder on the top of the dish.

To prepare the shrimp dish, after cleaning the wok, four spoons of corn oil are added to the wok. After the oil smokes slightly, the spring onions (II), garlic (IV), ginger (III) and 16 shrimp (I) are added to the wok and the ingredients are heated with stirring for 15 seconds. The shrimp sauce (V) is added to the wok and the stirring of the ingredients is continued for about 2 minutes or until the shrimp turn a bright red and the sauce becomes very thick and bright. The cooked shrimp dish is placed into a long serving dish.



The wok is again cleaned. Before the water in the pot boils, the wok is placed on a burner at the highest temperature. Three spoons of corn oil are added into the wok. After the oil smokes slightly, 4 ounces of pork (I) are put into the wok and the pork is stirred for 1 minute. The cooked pork dish is put into a container. When the water in the pot for the soup begins boiling, cooked pork, sliced bamboo (IV), founger (II), huang hua (V), bean curd (III), ginger (VI) are placed into the boiling water and the soup is boiled for 1 minute and then 4.0 ounces of the soup sauce (VIII) is added with stirring. Finally, starch (IX) and spring onions (VII) are added to the soup. The soup is transferred to a soup container and is kept hot.

The other two dishes are then cooked in accordance with the provided information. Ten spoons of corn oil are placed into the wok. After the oil smokes slightly, 24 ounces of sliced pork (I) are put into the wok and stirred for about two minutes (or until the meat turns completely white brown). The meat is removed and placed into a container. Four spoons of corn oil are added to the wok. After the oil begins to smoke slightly, 6 ounces of spring onions (VI) are added to the wok and are stirred for 15 seconds. Twelve ounces of sliced bamboo root (III), 12.0 ounces of founger (IV), and 6.0 ounces of huang hua (V) are added and cooked for 30 seconds, then the 18.0 ounces stirred fried eggs (II) are added and heated for 30 seconds. The previously half cooked pork is added and cooking

continues for 30 seconds. Finally, 6.0 ounces of sauce (VII) is put into the wok and the ingredients are stirred for another 30 seconds. The dish is now cooked. The completed pork dish is placed into a round dish for serving.

Next, the mushroom dish is cooked. The burner of the stove is set at the highest temperature. Sixteen ounces of corn oil is placed into the wok and is heated until the oil smokes slightly. The temperature is reduced to mid-high. The mushroom strings (I) are dipped into the sauce (II) to cover them completely. Four mushroom strings at a time are fried for 1.5 minutes or until they become a golden color. The fried mushroom strings are placed into a long container. Some pepper can be added to the top of the cooked mushroom strings as desired.

The step-by-step cooking instructions printed on the covers of the packages are following:

Sour and Hot Soup:

1. Set a burner at a high temperature.
2. Place a 10-inch soup pot containing 48 ounces of cold water on the stove.
3. Set another burner at the highest temperature.
4. Place a 12-inch wok on the stove burner and put 4 spoons of corn oil into the wok.
5. Put the pork (I) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly.
6. Stir the pork for 30 seconds, and then put it into a container.

7. After the water in the pot boils, put the previously half cooked pork, sliced bamboo root (IV), founger (II), huang hua (V), ginger (VI), and sliced bean curd (III) into the pot.
8. Boil the ingredients for one minute.
9. Put the soup sauce (VIII) into the pot and boil it for another minute.
10. Put the starch (IX) and spring onions (VII) into the soup.
11. Transfer the soup to a soup container and keep hot in oven and serve it hot.

Green Bean Lover:

1. Set the burner of the stove at the highest temperature.
2. Place a 12-inch wok or frying pan on the burner.
3. Put three spoons of corn oil into the wok.
4. Put 1.0 ounce spring onions (II) and 32 ounces of green beans (I) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly.
5. Stir ingredients for about 3 minutes or until the green beans turn completely bright green.
6. Put the garlic (III) and the sauce (IV) into the wok and stir the ingredients for another 30 seconds.
7. Put the dish into a container and serve it hot.

Mo Shu Pork:

1. Set a stove burner at the highest temperature.
2. Place a 12-inch wok or a frying pan on the stove.
3. Put 12 spoons of corn oil into the wok.

4. Put 24 ounces of pork (I) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly.
5. Stir the meat for about two minutes or until the meat turns completely white brown.
6. Put the meat into a container.
7. Put four spoons of corn oil into the wok.
8. Put 6.0 ounces of spring onions (VI) into the wok after the oil smokes slightly and stir them for 15 seconds.
9. Put 12.0 ounces of bamboo root (III), 12.0 ounces founger (IV), and 12.0 ounces of huang hua (V) into the wok and stir them for 30 seconds.
10. Put 18.0 ounces stirred fried egg (II) into the wok and stir all ingredients for 30 seconds.
11. Put the previously half cooked pork into the wok and stir all ingredients for 30 seconds.
12. Put 6 ounces of sauce (VII) into the wok and stir all ingredients for 15 seconds.
13. Put the cooked dish into a container and serve hot.

Honey Roasted Shrimp:

1. Set the stove burner at the highest temperature.
2. Place a 12-inch wok on the stove burner,
3. Put 4 spoons of corn oil into the wok.
4. Put spring onions (II), ginger (III), garlic (IV), and shrimp (I) into the wok after the oil begins to smoke slightly.

5. Stir the ingredients for one minute.
6. Put the sauce (V) into the wok.
7. Stir the ingredients for 2 minutes or until the shrimps turn a bright red and the shrimp sauce becomes thick and a bright color.
8. Put the shrimp dish into a container and serve hot.

Fried Mushroom Strings:

1. Set the burner at the highest temperature.
2. Place a 12-inch wok or a frying pan on the burner.
3. Put 16 ounces of corn oil into the wok.
4. Dip mushroom strings (I) into the sauce (II) and allow them to be covered completely by the sauce.
5. Change the burner temperature to mid-high after the oil starts smoking.
6. Fry four mushroom strings at a time for 1.5 minutes or until they become a golden color.
7. Place fried mushroom strings in a container and serve hot.

Method of food sterilization and packaging

There are several advanced packaging techniques currently available. Aseptic packaging and controlled atmosphere packaging are two most preferable ones. The main objective in the packaging of ingredients of a specific Chinese food dish is to keep them fresh until the Chinese food dish is to be consumed.

Aseptic packaging, literally defined, is the continuous sterilization of the food independent from the container, the sterilization of the container and lid, and the filling and sealing in an absolutely sterile atmosphere. Unlike all other means of food packaging, when aseptic processing is used, the processing of the food and the packaging are mutually dependent. It will increase the shelf-life of the packed food.

In aseptic packaging, the ingredients of a specific Chinese food dish will be aseptically processed, remain commercially sterile, and filled into a presterilized container in an atmosphere free of unwanted microorganisms. Prior to processing these ingredients, the equipment must be sterilized and maintained in a sterilized state. This is generally accomplished by subjecting the equipment to high temperature steam or, most often, continuous flow of high temperature water for a predetermined period of time. After sterilization of the processing equipment, the ingredients to be processed must immediately follow the sterilization media in order to remain sterile. The final Chinese food dish packages will be sterilized in several different ways, preferably including gas or radiation, or a combination thereof.

Unlike conventional canning where the food product is exposed to relatively high temperature for a long period of time, aseptically processed Chinese dish ingredients are processed using high temperature-short time (HTST) techniques. In other words, the product is heated very quickly to a high

temperature to sterilize the ingredients, then cooled very quickly and filled, generally at ambient temperatures. This system benefits from even distribution of heat and the maintenance of more natural organoleptic properties of the food.

Various companies have introduced different aseptic packaging lines. These companies include: Tetra Pak, James Dole Corp., Bosch, Benco, Continental Can Company, Boise Cascade, Metal Box System, Rampart Packaging-Mead, Scholle Corp., Fran Rica and Liqui-box.

For more information on packaging, see Wiley's Encyclopedia of Packaging Technology, 1982 Ed.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for providing Chinese food dishes wherein the final cooking is adapted for carrying out in home kitchens, comprising the following steps:
  - 1) at a location of a distribution system for said Chinese food dishes, individually collecting fresh high quality ingredients of preselected Chinese dishes;
  - 2) cleaning and trimming said individual ingredients for preparation of said Chinese food dishes;
  - 3) preparing said ingredients in preselected Chinese food acceptable dimensions and shapes;
  - 4) determining the weight/quantity ratio of the ingredients of said preselected Chinese dishes;
  - 5) packaging required amounts of said sized and shaped ingredients in accordance with step 4 hereof;
  - 6) providing appropriate information to persons acquiring said packages having said ingredients for the Chinese food dishes, to instruct use of said prepared ingredients to cook the desired Chinese food dishes; and
  - 7) conveying said packages containing said ingredients adapted for home cooking and said information to persons for home cooking said Chinese food dishes.
2. A method of Claim 1 wherein the packaging of said ingredients is done aseptically.



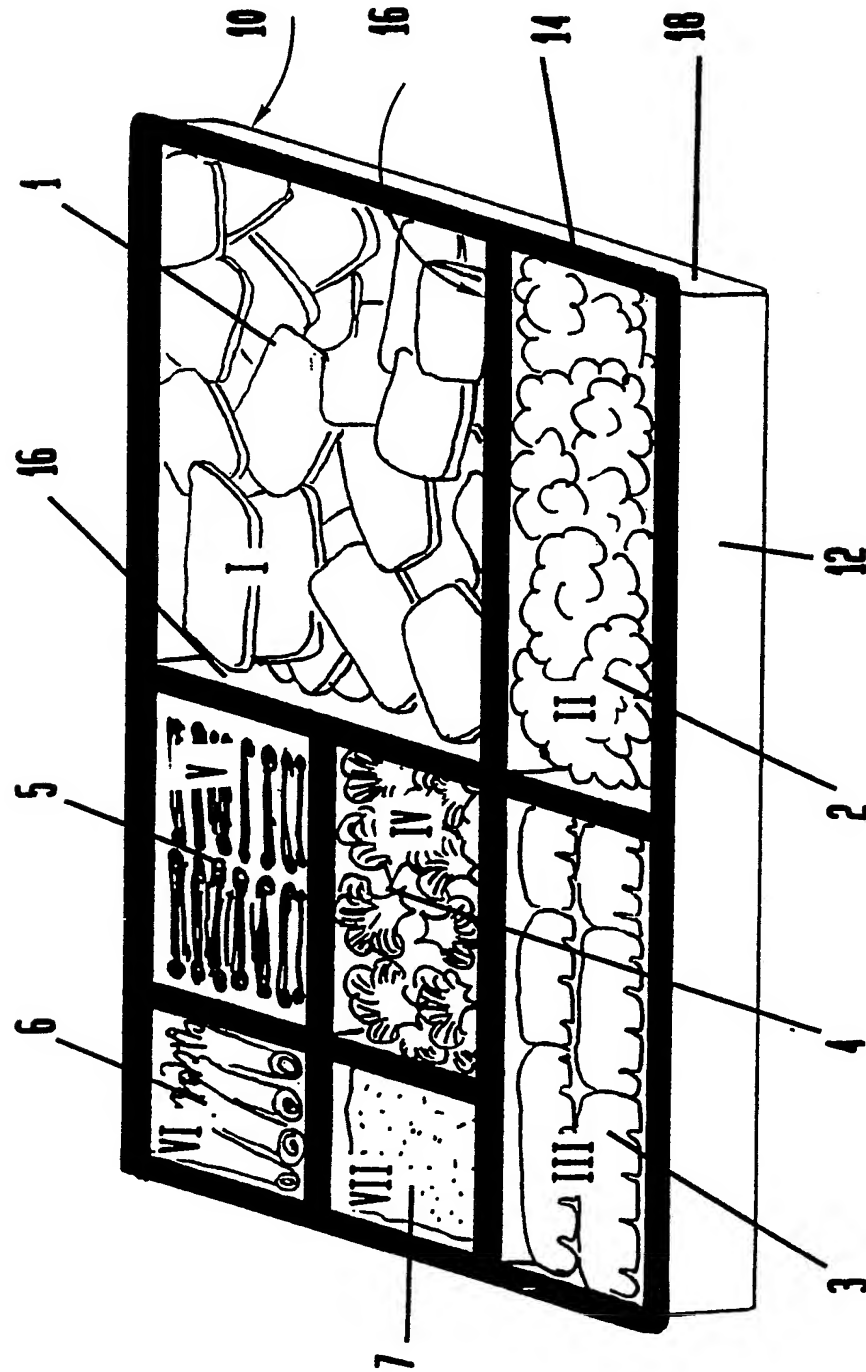
3. A method of Claim 1 wherein said package and the enclosed ingredients are sterilized at the time of packaging.
4. A method of Claim 1 wherein the ingredients are packaged individually in a multicompartment container having a cover therefore.
5. A method of Claim 4 wherein the ingredients are aseptically packaged.
6. A method of Claim 5 wherein the ingredients are aseptically packaged and said cover is sealed to said container.
7. A method of Claim 4 wherein said information to instruct preparation of said ingredients to cook the desired Chinese food dish accompanies the cover of said package.
8. A method of Claim 2 wherein said package is vacuum packaged.
9. A method of Claim 2 wherein said package has controlled environment within the package having an effective amount of an inert gas.
10. A method of Claim 4 wherein said package ingredients are aseptically and vacuum packaged therein, and has controlled environment within the package having an effective amount of an inert gas.

11. A method of Claim 10 wherein said information to instruct preparation of said ingredients to cook the desired Chinese food dish accompanies the cover of said package.
12. A Chinese food dish package comprising a multicompartment container, a mating cover therefore, at least three ingredients which comprise the required ingredients for cooking a preselected Chinese food dish, said ingredients being high quality ingredients having been
  - 1) collected individually at a location of a distribution system for Chinese food dish packages,
  - 2) cleaned and trimmed in preparation for use in cooking said Chinese food dish,
  - 3) prepared in the preselected Chinese food dish acceptable dimensions and shapes,
  - 4) packaged in predetermined weight/quantity ratio for preparation of said Chinese food dish,said package having appropriate information directed to a person acquiring said package to instruct use of ingredients to cook the preselected Chinese food dish, said information adapted for use in the home kitchen.
13. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 12 wherein said cover is sealed to said container.
14. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 13 wherein said ingredients were packaged aseptically.

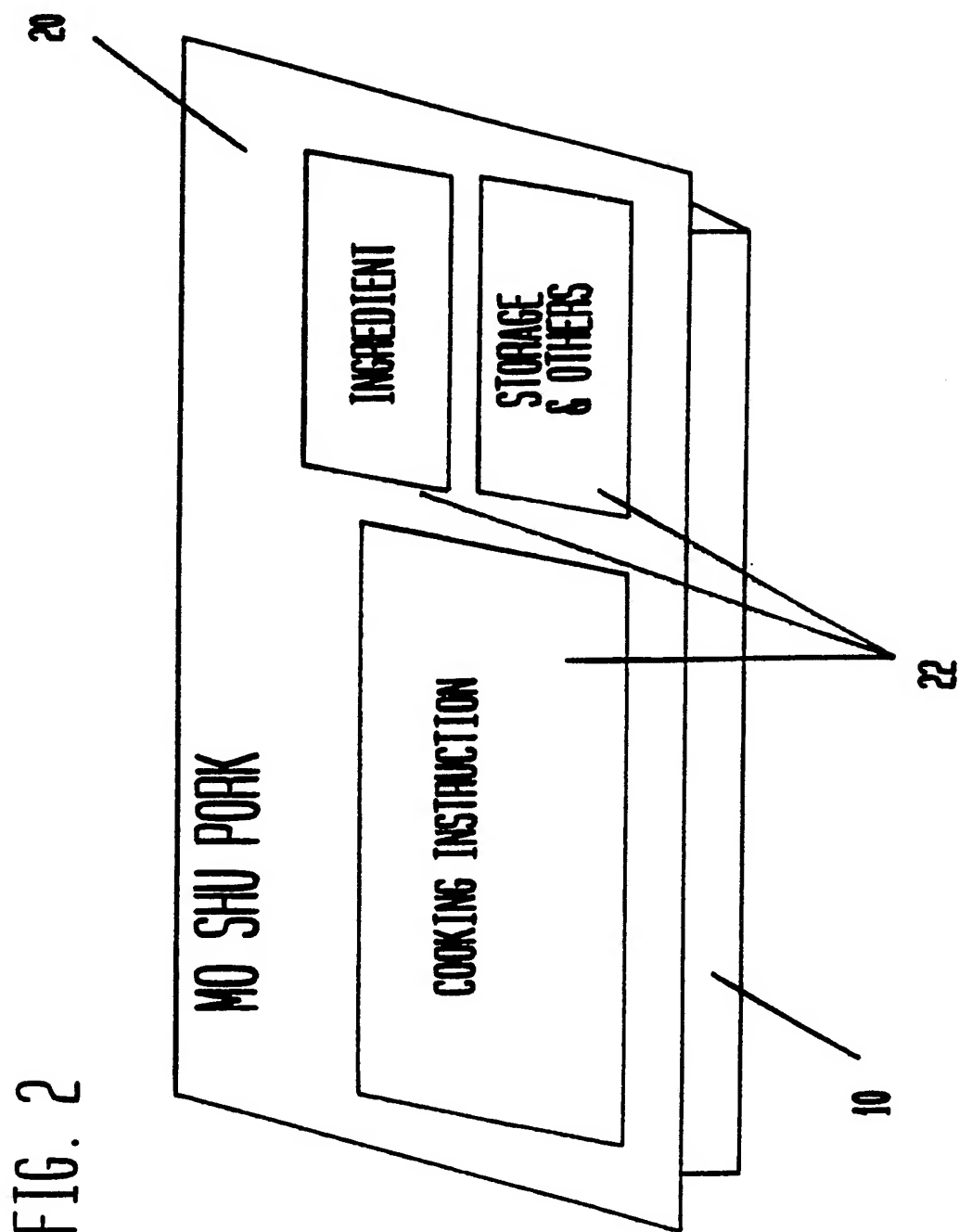
15. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 13 wherein said ingredients were sterilized upon packaging.
16. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 14 wherein the ingredients were vacuum packaged.
17. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 14 wherein said package has within the package a controlled environment having an effective amount of an acceptable inert gas.
18. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 14 wherein the ingredients were aseptically and vacuum packaged and has within the package a controlled environment having an effective amount of an acceptable inert gas.
19. A Chinese food dish package of Claim 12 wherein the information is printed or affixed otherwise to the cover of said package.

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FIG. 1

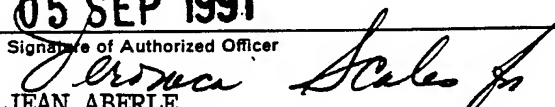


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# INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No. PCT/US91/03681

<b>I. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER</b> (if several classification symbols apply, indicate all) <sup>6</sup>		
According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both National Classification and IPC IPC (5): B65B 31/00, 5/00, 55/00 U.S. CL: 426/120, 399, 418		
<b>II. FIELDS SEARCHED</b>		
Minimum Documentation Searched <sup>7</sup>		
Classification System	Classification Symbols	
U.S. CL.	426/120, 316, 398, 399, 418, 419	
Documentation Searched other than Minimum Documentation to the Extent that such Documents are Included in the Fields Searched <sup>8</sup>		
<b>III. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT</b> <sup>9</sup>		
Category *	Citation of Document, <sup>11</sup> with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages <sup>12</sup>	Relevant to Claim No. <sup>13</sup>
X	US, A, 2,801,930, PAULUCCI 06 August 1957 (See column 3, lines 24-36, 66, 48-60; column 4, lines 13-39, Fig.1).	1,4,12,13
Y	CA, A, 1,082,655, LITO 29 July 1980 (See Fig.1).	<u>1,7,11,12,13</u> 19
Y	The Wiley Encyclopedia of Food Technology 1986 (See p.664, column 2, lines 35- end of page; p.665, Fig.2; p.22, lines 1-8 of the summary; p.21, column 1, lines 19-28; p.664, lines 1-3 under "Thermo form/Fill/Seal".	<u>2,3,5,6</u> 8-10,14-18
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>* Special categories of cited documents: <sup>10</sup></p> <p>"A" document defining the general state of the art which is not considered to be of particular relevance</p> <p>"E" earlier document but published on or after the international filing date</p> <p>"L" document which may throw doubts on priority claim(s) or which is cited to establish the publication date of another citation or other special reason (as specified)</p> <p>"O" document referring to an oral disclosure, use, exhibition or other means</p> <p>"P" document published prior to the international filing date but later than the priority date claimed</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>"T" later document published after the international filing date or priority date and not in conflict with the application but cited to understand the principle or theory underlying the invention</p> <p>"X" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered novel or cannot be considered to involve an inventive step</p> <p>"Y" document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.</p> <p>"&amp;" document member of the same patent family</p> </div> </div>		
<b>IV. CERTIFICATION</b>		
Date of the Actual Completion of the International Search	Date of Mailing of this International Search Report	
22 JULY 1991	05 SEP 1991	
International Searching Authority	Signature of Authorized Officer	
ISA/US	 JEAN ABERLE	

**PUB-NO:** WO009118792A1  
**DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER:** WO 9118792 A1  
**TITLE:** PACKAGED CHINESE FOOD AND  
METHOD OF PREPARING SAME  
**PUBN-DATE:** December 12, 1991

**INVENTOR-INFORMATION:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
SHI, WEIMIN	US

**ASSIGNEE-INFORMATION:**

<b>NAME</b>	<b>COUNTRY</b>
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**APPL-NO:** US09103681  
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**PRIORITY-DATA:** US52910290A (May 25, 1990)

**INT-CL (IPC):** B65B005/00 , B65B031/00 ,  
B65B055/00

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**US-CL-CURRENT:** 426/120 , 426/399 , 426/418

**ABSTRACT:**

Provided is a novel method of providing Chinese

food dishes adapted for home cooking. The method provides a large savings in time and cost and additionally provides fresh ingredients for making Chinese food dishes at comparatively low cost. The method provides that the fresh ingredients for making a Chinese food dish in accordance with a preselected recipe be collected at a location of a distribution system for said Chinese food dishes along with appropriate containers for packaging the ingredients. The fresh ingredients (I-VII) are cleaned, trimmed and are properly shaped and appropriately packaged, suitably individual compartments of a multicompartment (1-7) container (10) in amounts in conformance to a preselected recipe, which container can be covered and sealed. The provided packages (10) can be transferred to a home for cooking in accordance with the preselected recipe and instructions of which the home kitchen is informed.